

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 2623

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CY PINT

SUBJECT: MAKARIOS CONCERNED?

1. TWO RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH TOP MFA OFFICIALS GIVE HINTS OF MISGIVINGS BY ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS OVER USG ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROSPECTS FOR FORTHCOMING INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS AND TOWARDS HIS BEATITUDE HIMSELF.

2. DURING PRIVATE DINNER AUGUST 12 FONMIN CHRISTOPHIDES BRIEFED ME "CONFIDENTIALLY" ON DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICAL SCENE. ONE WAS THAT MAKARIOS HAS DECIDED NOT TO STAND FOR RE-ELECTION IN 1977, THAT IN THE MEANTIME HE WILL GIVE HIS ALL TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE CYPRUS PROBLEM THOUGH SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TURK CYPRIOTS, THEN STEP DOWN. WITH EMPHASIS, CHRISTOPHIDES INFORMED ME THAT MAKARIOS HAD RECENTLY DECIDED TO SUPPORT CLERIDES AS HIS SUCCESSOR.

3. A FEW DAYS LATER (AUGUST 20) MFA DIRGEN PELAPHIAS, ONE OF
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MAKARIOS' CLOSEST CONFIDANTS AND VERBATIM MOUTHPIECE FOR WHATEVER

THOUGHTS HIS BEATITUDE CHOOSES TO PUT IN CIRCULATION, EXPOUNDED AT LENGTH TO THE MDC ON MAKARIOS' CURRENT STATE OF MIND. HIS BEATITUDE, PELAGHIAS SAID, IS PERTURBED OVER STATEMENTS PREVALENT IN FOREIGN AND GREEK CYPRIOT CIRCLES THAT ONLY HE (MAKARIOS) STANDS IN THE WAY OF A CYPRUS SOLUTION, THAT SOMEHOW AN AGREEMENT WOULD FALL EASILY INTO PLACE IF ONLY HE WERE REMOVED FROM THE SCENE. THIS, PELAGHIAS PROTESTED, NOT ONLY DEFAMES HIS BEATITUDE BUT ALSO RUNS COUNTER TO POLITICAL REALITIES OF CYPRUS. ARCHBISHOP DOES NOT CRAVE TO REMAIN IN POWER. HIS ONLY GOAL IS TO HELP FIND THE BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR ALL CYPRIOTS AND TO MAKE IT PALATABLE TO THE GREEK CYPRIOT PEOPLE; WITH THIS GOAL ACHIEVED, HE WOULD GLADLY STEP DOWN FROM THE PRESIDENCY. IN ANY EVENT, MAKARIOS WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION IN 1977--THAT MUCH, PELAGHIAS UNDERLINED, IS CERTAIN.

4. FAR FROM BLOCKING A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT, PELAGHIAS SAID, MAKARIOS IS ACTIVELY WORKING FOR IT AND IS DEMONSTRATING A FLEXIBILITY WHICH HIS DETRACTORS FAIL TO RECOGNIZE. WHILE HIS BEATITUDE IS THE ESSENCE OF REASONABLENESS AND FLEXIBILITY, HE OF COURSE IS NOT PREPARED TO SIGN A CYPRIOT AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD BE UNFAIR TO THE GREEK CYPRIOT SIDE AND HENCE INEVITABLY LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE HOSTILITIES. PELAGHIAS THEN LISTED SEVERAL CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH MAKARIOS WOULD BE READY TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT:

--IF A SIZEABLE PORTION OF THE REFUGEES CAN RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. ("WE KNOW THAT PERHAPS 100,000 WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES", IN PELAGHIAS WORDS).

--IF A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TERRITORY IS RETURNED TO THE GREEK CYPRIOT SIDE. ("SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 25 AND 35 PERCENT REMAINING IN TURKISH CYPRIOT HANDS").

--IF THERE CAN BE SOME REASONABLE AGREEMENT ON POWER OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. ("WE ARE WILLING TO SHARE POWER ON AN EQUITABLE BASIS, BUT, YOU UNDERSTAND, WE CAN'T GIVE 50 PERCENT OF ALL GOVERNMENT JOBS TO THE OTHER SIDE. BUT UNQUESTIONABLY A FAIR SHARE".)

--IF THE TURKS AGREE TO WITHDRAW MOST OF THEIR ARMED FORCES
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FROM THE ISLAND.

5. IN CONCLUSION, PELAGHIAS CAME BACK TO TWO CENTRAL THEMES, (A) THAT MAKARIOS HIMSELF IS NOT A ROADBLOCK TO REACHING A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE SETTLEMENT AND (B) THAT MAKARIOS LOOKS AT THE CYPRUS SITUATION REALISTICALLY, AND AS A STATESMAN IS READY TO MAKE IMPORTANT COMPROMISES.

6. COMMENT: I TAKE FOREGOING CONVERSATIONS AS INDICATION THAT MAKARIOS IS VAGUELY WORRIED THAT USG, AND PERHAPS KARAMANLIS AS WELL, MAY VIEW HIM AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO CYPRUS SOLUTION AND MIGHT JUST BE CONSIDERING AN EFFORT TO REMOVE THAT IMPEDIMENT. THOUGH CHRISTOPHIDES AND PELAGHIAS HE IS IN EFFECT SAYING THAT HE IS INDISPENSABLE TO A SOLUTION AND IF WE BEAR WITH HIM WE WILL GET BOTH A SOLUTION AND OUR CHOICE (SIC) AS NEXT PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS.
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